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RESEARCH REPORT

ALL COUNTRIES ARE NOT EQUAL:
U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO THE MIDDLE EAST
DURING THE REAGAN ERA

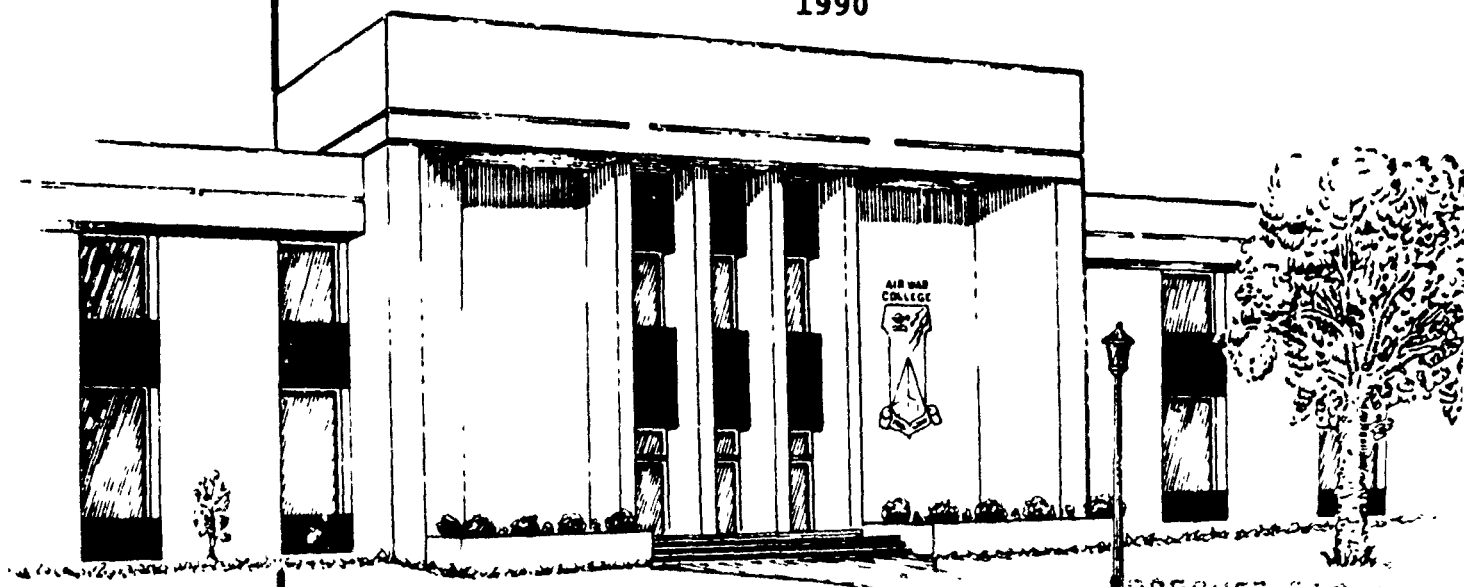
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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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ALL COUNTRIES ARE NOT EQUAL:
U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO THE MIDDLE EAST DURING THE
REAGAN ERA

by

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A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Dr. William P. Snyder

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: All Countries Are Not Equal: U.S. Security Assistance to the Middle East During the Reagan Era AUTHOR: Mark Ewig, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

The U.S. security assistance and arms transfer programs to the Middle East during the Reagan era did not support U.S. national security objectives for the region. Congress gave the preponderance of aid to Israel and Egypt for participation in the Camp David peace process. Israeli actions often worked against assuring access to oil, limiting Soviet influence, creating an Arab-Israeli peace settlement, and fostering an overall regional peace. Yet Israeli representation efforts in the U.S. Congress prevented any cuts in military aid to Israel. Moderate Arab states were often unable to purchase or receive credits for U.S. arms because of the domestic political strength of "Israeli first" congressmen. Inconsistencies and insensitivities to legitimate non-Camp David security needs prevented arms transfers to numerous moderate Arab states. As a result, the implementation of the security assistance and arms transfer programs failed to contribute to the achievement of U.S. regional security objectives, leading to a loss of influence and credibility.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER.	11
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.	iii
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	iv
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
II. NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST.	4
III. SECURITY ASSISTANCE.	8
The Reagan Administration.	9
Israel.	11
Egypt.	22
Jordan.	25
Saudi Arabia.	28
Gulf States.	33
Operation Staunch.	35
IV. U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE.	37
Objective: Fostering Security.	37
Objective: Limiting Soviet Influence.	42
Objective: Just and Lasting Peace.	44
Objective: Assuring Access to Oil.	45
V. CONCLUSION.	48
APPENDIX A: U.S. FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CREDIT FINANCING.	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	55



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

U.S.-built aircraft flown by Israelis and paid for by the Americans attacked targets in Iraq and Tunisia.

U.S.-built tanks, artillery pieces and aircraft with cluster bomb units (CBUs) manned by Israelis and paid for by the Americans moved into Lebanon against Palestinian and Syrian concentrations. On the other hand, U.S.-built F-15s, HAWKS, surface-to-air missiles and tanks scheduled to be manned and paid for by military forces of the moderate Arab nations were attacked and defeated in the U.S. Congress. Events such as these dramatized the inconsistencies in our security assistance program to the Middle East.

The United States security assistance and arms transfer programs to the Middle East during the eight years of the Reagan administration did not fully support the U.S. national security objectives for the region. Congress grossly favored Israel, and, to a lesser extent, Egypt in doling out Foreign Military Sales Credit Financing (FMSCR). Congress continuously prevented moderate Arab nations with legitimate security needs from purchasing or receiving U.S. armaments. The result was a rift between our national security objectives and our military assistance programs. Consequently, U.S. influence decreased during the Reagan

years due to our inconsistencies and to our insensitivities to the real U.S. interests in the region.

In examining this complex topic, this paper begins with a brief examination of U.S. national security objectives. These were supposed to serve as the basis for the security assistance and arms transfer programs, but were often ignored for political reasons. Key presidential policy pronouncements served to clarify and to focus our security objectives.

Chapter III looks at some of the specifics of security assistance and arms transfers to the Middle East during the Reagan years. Israel and Egypt, nations which receive the bulk of our regional and worldwide security assistance dollars, are given special attention. The difficulties in providing security assistance to key and friendly Arab nations showed the degree of inconsistency which ultimately affected our national security objectives in the area.

Chapter IV surveys the relationship between key tenants of the Reagan regional security assistance program and our national security objectives. It examines some major problems and conflicts relating to our objectives of security and prosperity, Soviet influence, the peace process and access to oil.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the gaps and inconsistencies between national security objectives and the security assistance and arms transfer programs to the Middle East. Several recommendations are offered to improve the future of U.S. security assistance to the region.

CHAPTER II

NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Theoretically, our national security objectives guide U.S. security assistance and arms transfers to the Middle East. In his last National Security Strategy of the United States report, President Reagan in 1988 identified our Middle East objectives as:

- helping to forge a just and lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors
- detering and, if necessary, defending against Soviet aggression
- limiting Soviet influence
- fostering the security and prosperity of Israel and the moderate Arab states by improving economic conditions and the indigenous defense capabilities
- curbing state-sponsored terrorism
- maintaining freedom of air and sea navigation
- assuring access to oil on reasonable terms for ourselves and our allies
- discouraging nuclear proliferation (61:29)

Problems arise because these security objectives generally exist without prioritization and without clarity of definition. The politicians establish the priorities for our security objectives based on the approval of the annual security assistance program or approval of arms sales agreements. This leads to ambiguity and contradictions in

policy implementation. For example, how does the U.S. guarantee the security of Israel and yet improve the indigenous defense capabilities of a moderate Arab state such as Jordan? Policy guidance, if available, sometimes serves to clarify and prioritize these objectives.

The Nixon Doctrine served as a basis for our large-scale security assistance to the Middle East. It provided military and economic assistance, if requested, to the threatened nation which would, in turn, provide the manpower for its own defense. The doctrine, born in the Vietnam era, recognized the limits of U.S. military power and the necessity for cooperation with friendly nations. U.S. assistance would be provided without the formal mutual security arrangement but simply upon the ability of the recipient nation to cope with regional security issues and to bring about regional stability. (23:23-28)

The U.S. applied this doctrine to the Middle East and used security assistance and arms transfers to enhance the capabilities of Israel as well as Saudi Arabia and Iran, our "twin pillars" for the regional stability of the Persian Gulf. Jordan and later Egypt after the 1975 expulsion of the Soviets, also qualified for security assistance under this doctrine. The U.S. provided military hardware, advisory support and training while the host nation contributed the manpower.

Almost a decade later, new conditions in the Third World involving Soviet and Soviet-proxy forces created the

necessity for further policy elaboration. Marxist takeovers in Angola(1974) and Ethiopia(1978), massive arms deliveries to Syria and Libya after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and the war between the two Yemens on the Arabian peninsula(1979) raised the specter of Soviet domination, or, at least, encroachment in the Middle East. The crisis became real after the departure of the Shah of Iran in 1979, the subsequent hostage crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December of that year. The U.S. perception increased that Soviet domination of this key world resource area could lead to a possible disruption of the oil supplies to the U.S. and other Western states. One "pillar" (Iran) had fallen; a new approach to security assistance was necessary.

The Carter Doctrine signalled this change. Reacting to numerous charges of weakness in our national security policy and particularly in light of the Christmas 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter during the 1980 State of the Union address stated that:

Any attempt by an outside power to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force. (56:703)

The doctrine expanded the officially proclaimed area of "vital interests" to the United States by adding a host of Gulf littoral nations to the list. The fulcrum of U.S.

policy shifted eastward. The doctrine implied that the U.S. had to project military power, build an infrastructure for coalition warfare, but at the same time be ready to conduct unilateral action, if necessary, to counter the Soviet threat in the area. The Carter administration looked to the newly formed Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) to implement this policy. (27:132, 48:439)

The Reagan Administration supported the Carter doctrine when it came into office. In October, 1983, the Reagan Corollary added that Saudi Arabia would not be allowed to become another Iran. (55:A-5) Reagan viewed the Gulf, and particularly Saudi Arabia, as the area of primacy in the Middle East. This view collided with his unwavering support for Israel which he saw as the "counterweight to the Soviet Union in the region." (2:2) Contradiction in objectives, contradictions in presidential views--these would not lead to clarity in implementing our security assistance program to the Middle East.

CHAPTER III

SECURITY ASSISTANCE

Security assistance, one of the most fundamental components of the overall U.S. defense and foreign policy, must carefully dovetail with U.S. global and regional national security objectives if it is to be meaningful. In addition to the obvious purpose of enhancing the self-defense of friends and allies, it aids by:

contributing to a balanced country package of military and economic aid,...supports independent political development, promotes stability; encourages economic development and reform; contributes to base and facility access needed to bolster our own force projection capabilities; and promotes the interoperability of U.S. and allied forces to strengthen our collective security framework. (58:92)

Additionally, security assistance can enhance access to certain governments, influence export policies favorable to the U.S., serve to balance regional military powers in critical areas, and limit Soviet influence through market denial and moderation of the recipient's weapons acquisition. (28:169-70) The security assistance that must ultimately guarantee our national security emerges from what must be the most exhaustive legislative-executive review process in the world and most certainly the most scrutinized \$10 billion in the U.S. federal budget.

The Reagan Administration

The Reagan administration overturned many of the arms transfers policies of President Carter. Carter's emphasis on economic aid and human rights was replaced by the notion that arms sales were an essential element of our foreign policy. The numerous restrictions on arms sales and their linkages to human rights improvements gave way to arms sales which made a net contribution to enhanced deterrence and defense.

The first Reagan-submitted security assistance program for the Middle East significantly increased the major security aid programs. For fiscal year (FY) 1982, Foreign Military Sales Credit Financing loans rose by 27 percent, the Military Assistance Program by 60 percent and the Economic Support Fund by 22 percent. The budget increased the FMSCR to Egypt by 30 percent but kept the \$1.4 billion figure for Israel. See Appendix A.

After a few years of growth, budgetary reductions decreased the FMSCR budget for the FY86 through FY88 period. Congress cut substantial amounts from non-earmarked Middle Eastern countries. For example, in the FY87 budget, Jordan received only \$44 million out of \$133 requested; Morocco got \$54 million out of \$90 million; and Oman received \$15 out of \$59.

Meanwhile, military assistance for Egypt and Israel, the two key earmarked states, grew until the FY87 budget.

At that point, FMSCR leveled off at \$1.3 billion for Egypt and \$1.8 billion for Israel--an approximate seven to ten ratio. While Congress almost annually cut the Reagan request for overall foreign aid, the Egyptian and Israeli figures seemed sacrosanct. Each year the administration further bolstered these figures by gradually increasing the amount of forgiven FMSCR--loans which do not have to be repaid. Egypt and Israel received 57 percent of the worldwide U.S. security assistance in FY82 and 64 percent in FY89. Regionally, the Camp David partners received over 90 percent of our Middle East security aid.

Critics of our security assistance program pointed to the concentration of security aid to just two countries and argued that the \$3.1 billion annual figure for the Camp David signees equated to just over \$700 for each Israeli citizen and \$50 for each Egyptian annually. Proponents noted that aid to the Camp David signees amounted to just \$20 per year for each American for this type of "peace insurance policy" in the Middle East.

Was our Middle East security assistance program equitable? Was it overly affected by our "special relationship" with Israel? Did our aid packages reflect our national security strategy in the region? Let us answer these questions by taking a look at individual country security assistance programs during the Reagan years.

Israel

No one doubts that a "special relationship" exists between the United States and Israel. Israel received the most security assistance each year during the Reagan administration...the Carter administration...the Ford administration...and the Nixon administration. In a congressman's mind there is but one major constituency for security assistance, that is the American-Israeli Political Action Committee (AIPAC)--the so called "Jewish lobby". AIPAC mobilizes numerous congressional votes through its lobbying activities and then uses its veto power to block sales of weapons to Israeli opponents, while ensuring increasingly better terms for Israeli aid in the budgetary process. AIPAC involved itself so much that security assistance draft documents are routinely sent to it for comment by congressmen before hearings. (35:135-7) The result is that security assistance for Israel not only handily passes congressional scrutiny each year but also includes amounts of money with terms which sometimes exceed the administration requests. (35:139)

Israeli aid passed each year because of obvious domestic political benefits and the real and perceived military benefits from this relationship. The advantages from the Israeli connection include intelligence gathering, refinement of American arms and military doctrine in combat, innovations through Israeli modifications to U.S. equipment,

prestige for American weaponry vis-a-vis the Soviet equipment used by Israel's enemies, and parallel actions to reduce Soviet influence in the region and to eliminate the worldwide terrorist network. (52:475-97) These benefits are real, tangible and important. Do they outweigh the negative effects on the overall national security objectives toward the Middle East?

The overall American-Israeli relationship swerved several times during the Reagan years, but with only the slightest effects on the security assistance program. Candidate Reagan, during the 1980 campaign, spoke and wrote repeatedly about the increased value of Israel as a "strategic asset" especially in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of Iran, one of the "twin pillars" of U.S. regional policy. (9:5) The term "strategic asset" suggested that Israel remained a bulwark of support in an increasingly unstable region of the world against the common nemesis, the Soviet Union.

Israel needed this mindset when in June 1981 Israeli F-16 aircraft destroyed the Iraqi Osirak nuclear reactor outside of Baghdad. Still, the raid appeared to be a clear violation of the Arms Export Control Act which states that U.S. armaments will only be used for defensive purposes. According to the law, any country found guilty of a "substantial violation" of this law cannot receive any FMS credit loans. (62:1489) The U.S. apparently accepted the Israeli explanation of the need for the attack against Iraq,

since it was in both national interests not to allow an Arab nation to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Washington responded only by delaying and then suspending F-16 deliveries for just over two months. The Arab world angrily attacked Washington for its apparent complicity in this matter, even though many of these countries were not great friends of Iraq.

President Reagan waited until the furor had died down before he formally accepted the notion of Israel as a "strategic asset" when he signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation with Israel in November 1981. The meaning of the phrase "strategic asset" was never completely clarified, but it seemed to imply that Israel provided a sense of "reliability and military prowess" against the Soviets in this unstable region. (52:475) According to Major General Auraham Tamir who was an Israeli representative for these negotiations, Israeli Prime Minister Begin had proposed the accord during a September, 1981 visit. Secretary of Defense Weinberger on advice from the Joint Chiefs of Staff urged Reagan to keep security relations with Israel as low as possible in order not to undermine U.S. influence in the moderate Arab states. Secretary of State Haig viewed the matter differently and focused on the ability to deter the Soviets from gaining influence in the area. (53:216-217) Ultimately, President Reagan accepted Haig's position.

Just over a month after the signing, the President placed the agreement in abeyance following the unexpected and provocative Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights. The Israelis argued the inherent right of self-defense and stated that they were not prepared to subordinate their defense policy to a narrow interpretation of strategic cooperation. (53:214-216) They were angered that an agreement could be overturned in such a short time. Despite the disagreement, the security assistance pipeline to Israel did not slow down.

Military aid to Tel Aviv provoked the most serious security assistance controversy of the administration. During the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Israeli aircraft dropped cluster bomb units (CBUs), and artillery batteries fired CBU shells against enemy targets. Major General Aharon Yariv, a former Israeli intelligence director, later admitted that the Israelis used these weapons against "organized resistance", mainly the Syrian armor and infantry. He denied press reports that the weapons had been used against civilians in Palestinian refugee camps and that numerous Lebanese and Palestinian children had been maimed after picking up these weapons. (4:15) The House Committee on Foreign Affairs discussed this matter in July, but reached no conclusion in open session. The hearings and the press, however, reported the existence of 1976 and 1978 secret agreements on CBUs whereby Israel had pledged in the

later accord not to use these weapons except in combat with two or more Arab states. (42:12,6:1)

President Reagan became involved in the controversy when, after receiving an official note from the Israeli government, he put on hold the transfer of 4000 155mm CBU artillery shells to Israel. He followed this action on 26 July by indefinitely suspending all CBU shipments to Tel Aviv. (24:16) While some reports indicated that the ban was lifted in 1983, administration officials in 1986 denied this. The point was immaterial. At that time a Justice Department investigation revealed that an Israeli firm had legally received the technology used to make cluster weapons. (11:16) With the Israelis producing CBUs, the standing restriction against this type of security aid to Israel had been overcome.

The invasion itself prompted only a mild rebuke from the administration. President Reagan withheld his submission of an Israeli request to Congress for 75 additional F-16s for a few months, even though some administration statements linked release to Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Arab nations took the aircraft release as a signal that Washington certainly had given the "green light" for the invasion. While no one in the administration had clearly stated that approval for the invasion was given, the Israeli journalist Zeev Schiff best summarized the controversy when he stated that "Whether wittingly or unwittingly, Washington gave Jerusalem the

green light and Israel interpreted the lack of strong objections as support for their objective." (50:85)

Washington inaction appeared to condone the Israeli military solution.

Congress reacted in a generally negative fashion. Senate Appropriations Committee chairman Mark Hatfield (R-OR) condemned the invasion as an attempted military solution to regional problems. He asked for a halt in military assistance to all Middle Eastern countries including Israel. (65:6) House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Clement Zablocki (D-WI) stated that under no circumstances could the invasion be regarded as "self-defense". He and other opponents of further arms shipments to Israel argued that, according to the Arms Export Control Act, the invasion constituted an illegal use of U.S. weapons. Others, such as staunchly pro-Israeli Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA), stated that Israeli actions were justified and within the realm of self-defense. (65:6) After the September massacres of Palestinians outside Beirut in the Israeli-occupied zone, even Cranston called for the halting of arms to Israel. The congressional support for continued massive security assistance to Israel reached a low point, but only for a moment. With mid-term elections coming in November, 1982, an arms cut-off was politically out of the question.

The invasion and the massacres led to some White House action. The president requested a \$50 million reduction in security aid to Israel in the FY83 Foreign Aid

Appropriations Bill. Committees in both houses had voted sizeable increases for Israel. As a compromise, congressional leaders placed the aid package for Israel in a continuing resolution needed to run the government. The bill passed without the presidential reduction and without the large congressional increase. The bill added \$50 million to Israeli security aid. (63:2357)

President Reagan continued the attack and cut \$200 million from the proposed FY84 Israeli security assistance figure. When AIPAC attacked Reagan's cut as "guerrilla warfare against Israel" and mounted a full-scale lobbying effort, Congress not only restored the original amount, but added an extra \$100 million. (63:2357) The president conceded. The overwhelmingly pro-Israeli sentiment in Congress stifled what little discussion there had been of cuts in Israeli security aid. The severity of actions by Israel warranted a greater response, but not from this Congress--not from this administration.

Israeli actions during this same period affected our security assistance with other friendly Middle Eastern nations. In 1983 the U.S. apparently concluded a secret accord whereby Jordan would provide a two brigade, 8,000 man, strike force for use as a critical part of the RDJTF in the protection of the Persian Gulf oil fields. This Jordanian force fit the mold as a well-trained, rapidly deployable contingent in close proximity to the area to be defended. The force also represented a monarchy which was

not aligned for the most part in intra-Arab political disputes, and therefore acceptable to the conservative, monarchical Arab Gulf states. Security assistance approval for this force was extremely sensitive and required closed meeting funding for the three C-130 aircraft, STINGER shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, anti-tank missiles and other task force equipment. In late 1983 Israeli radio leaked the existence of this unit. The leak was clearly designed to sabotage the Jordanian strike force. It publicly raised the Israeli concern and the political concern in Washington that this Jordanian force could also be used, theoretically, against the Jewish state. The administration, caught off guard and reacting to growing congressional opposition, tabled the request in November, 1983. In a bit of twisted logic, the administration had hoped to overcome opposition to the Jordanian force by allowing Israel to "fence" \$550 million of its proposed FY84 security aid to finance the development of the Israeli-manufactured aircraft, the LAVI fighter. The administration goodwill gesture, which reversed its previous position, failed to change Tel Aviv's mind. Ultimately, the administration completely withdrew the request for the funding of the Jordanian strike force, but the half a billion dollars remained as the start up money for the ill-fated LAVI program. (59:2438;13:304) Security assistance seemingly brought little political leverage for Washington as Israel successfully scuttled a major portion of the

"teeth" of the U.S. commitment to the defense of the Gulf without retribution. Jordan, in the meantime, to save face at home and in the Arab world, denied that the Jordanians had ever considered participation in such a force.

Despite some of the most trying times in Israeli-American relations caused by the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the disclosure of the Jordanian strike force, the two nations continued to expand their security relationship. They signed a new strategic cooperation agreement in November 1983 which supplanted the short-lived 1981 agreement. Two elements of the agreement related to security assistance--the establishment of a Joint Political-Military Group to plan combined exercises and training and the U.S. purchase of \$200 million worth of Israeli-produced military hardware per year. (60:31) This action came even though the Israelis had not overturned their annexation of the Golan Heights, the cause of the original action by Reagan.

The privileged position of Israel in U.S. security relations continued with the signing of a secret agreement outlining Israel's role in Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) research in May 1986. Israel joined the ranks of two close European allies, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, in this endeavor. Unique Israeli research into short-range missile defense, said to be ahead of U.S. scientists in some areas, greatly influenced Washington to sign this agreement. (29:19) As a result,

Washington set aside an amount of security assistance each year which was to be spent in Israel on SDI-related research. Thus, while the overall amount of security assistance to Israel grew slowly during the Reagan years, "offsets" such as this gave Israel advantages which increased the relative amount of aid.

This signing came at a time when Israel thwarted both the U.S. peace plan and the issue of Palestinian rights. Additionally, the Israelis had just successfully completed a commando raid on the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) headquarters in Tunis which killed a top Palestinian leader. The violation of Tunisian sovereignty by Israel caused serious condemnation in the Arab world. The U.S. failed to exert any leverage against Israeli security assistance, even though the incident was similar to the 1981 raid against the Iraqi nuclear reactor. The U.S. considered the Israeli attack as a defensive move against terrorism, and disregarded the concerns of a close, fragile Arab ally, Tunisia.

Another major development occurred in December, 1987 when Secretary of Defense Carlucci and Prime Minister Rabin signed a ten-year Memorandum of Understanding designating Israel as a "major non-Nato ally". This agreement allowed enhanced participation in U.S. military research and development projects, and allowed the purchase of munitions such as the STINGER, hitherto available only to NATO allies. (45:27,43:25) Only three other countries, Japan,

Australia and later Egypt, received this status as a non-NATO ally. The special relationship expanded even though little progress had been made on the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian front. The focus was on stability, and an anti-Soviet, anti-terrorist posture. Israel fit the bill.

Growing Arab hostility toward this relationship did little to prevent the administration from signing a new five-year U.S.-Israeli "strategic" agreement in April 1988. Seemingly embarrassed by its overwhelming pro-Israeli stance, the administration, chose a low-key ceremony with a minimum of participants. Conversely in Israel, Prime Minister Shamir signed the agreement with great fanfare and as part of the 40th anniversary celebrations. (12:23)

The security assistance policy during the Reagan administration years showed that aid to Israel was practically immutable. Violations of other nations' sovereignty, as in the case of Israeli attacks on Iraq and Tunisia, mattered little. A full-scale invasion of Lebanon and the apparent illegal use of CBUs produced no significant reductions in aid from Washington. The scuttling of the Jordanian strike force portion of the RDJTF created little effect. The deep "Israeli-first" feeling in Congress and in the administration, bolstered by AIPAC lobbying, ensured that Israel received its aid without strings, without cuts and, in most cases, without linkage to its cooperation on U.S. regional security issues. This contrasted sharply with the treatment given to our Arab allies in the region.

Egypt

Egypt stood on the other side of the Camp David agreement. Of all the Arab countries, the Reagan administration singled out Cairo for its commitment to a U.S.-brokered peace through a generous policy of rewards. After President Mubarak reestablished the pro-Western direction set by Anwar Sadat, Washington increased the amount of security assistance to Cairo. Even though they have received the second highest amount of U.S. security aid each year since 1979, the Egyptians perceived that this amount was not the near equality with Israel promised at Camp David. (17:237-8) Even then the amount given was only a fraction of what Egypt had identified as needed to meet their security needs. (7:912) Additionally, hundreds of U.S. officials scrutinized Egyptian administration of this aid in an action which contrasted sharply with the almost pure Israeli handling of U.S. aid. (3:10)

The Reagan administration decreased the security aid disparity between Egypt and Israel until it settled at the 7:10 Egyptian to Israeli ratio. Washington appreciated that Cairo buttressed most U.S. policy initiatives in the region. The support provided in Chad to the forces fighting the Libyan-backed rebels, the movement against Libyan-backed terrorism as well as the aid to the mujahedeen in Afghanistan clearly were in line with U.S. regional security objectives. Yet for four years congressmen criticized Cairo

at the annual foreign aid bill hearings for pulling the Egyptian ambassador out of Israel after the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. While security assistance figures were sacrosanct thanks to earmarking, such criticism showed that Cairo clearly did not receive the same treatment as Tel Aviv.

Among the Arab nations, Egypt escaped most public criticism because of its strong role in supporting the RDJTF (later Central Command [CENTCOM]). Egypt served as a linchpin in the BRIGHT STAR exercises in the region hosting units ranging up to 10,000 U.S. troops in 1980, 1981, 1983, 1985, and 1987. The continued Egyptian use of Soviet equipment and doctrine made them ideally suited for the opposed forces portion of the exercises. (23:40-41) While at times, Omani, Sudanese and Kenyan forces declined participation in these joint exercises, Egypt's participation stood firm.

As the second largest beneficiary of U.S. security assistance, President Mubarak did not align completely with U.S. security policies. He demonstrated his own independence of action when he reversed the offer made by President Anwar Sadat to allow U.S. personnel to develop \$400 million worth of facilities at Ras Banas on the Red Sea. CENTCOM planners hoped to use this airfield and port as a major divisional staging area for U.S. forces in a contingency in the Persian Gulf, some 1086 miles away. Located in a remote part of Egypt, the facilities would have been ideal. (23:38,77) Mubarak refused to sign an agreement because of the possible

negative political effects in fueling opposition, especially from Islamic fundamentalists. He could not accept the stationing of any foreign troops on Egyptian soil, but continued to allow U.S. access to Egyptian facilities.

Washington and Cairo periodically crossed purposes in other areas. In October, 1985, U.S. Navy aircraft forced down an Egyptian airliner in Italy in order to capture the terrorist Abu Nidal. Egypt stridently objected to this action, and cancelled a scheduled winter exercise with the U.S. Later the U.S. failed to persuade Egypt to undertake a joint U.S.-Egyptian military operation designed to overthrow Libyan leader Qaddafi. Cairo balked at the plan apparently because it would damage its reintegration efforts into the Arab world. (66:1) In April, 1986, Cairo denounced Washington for its attacks on Libya. Despite defending a traditional enemy, Egypt actively sought reidentification with the Arabs. In all of these cases Washington did nothing that would affect the annual security assistance to Egypt. Once again the Camp David partners seemed immune from security assistance cutbacks.

The U.S. security assistance program to Egypt basically remained above the day-to-day differences that sometimes exist between allies. An Egyptian intellectual best summed it up when he stated that Americans want Egypt to be an ally like Israel, but it is not. Egypt wants America to be a great friend of ours like with Israel, but Washington

cannot. (44:14) Perhaps this reflects the tension that will always exist in the security relationship between Washington and Cairo. Egypt enjoyed the status as premier Arab country in terms of security assistance, but could never reach the special relationship which Israel had with Washington.

Jordan

Other friendly Arab governments seemed to be in a special class regarding arms sales because of the active political prowess of AIPAC. Jordan faced tremendous problems because it was not a Camp David player and because of its proximity to Israel.

In 1981 the U.S. refused to sell the mobile HAWK SAM system to Jordan to complement the sale of fixed HAWK sites in 1974. This refusal, coupled with continuous Israeli overflights of Jordanian territory, including one during the raid on the Iraqi reactor, prompted Amman, with Iraqi security aid, to purchase Soviet SA-8 missile launchers and ZSU 23-4 radar-guided, anti-aircraft artillery guns. (7:914-5) The U.S. had for many years looked upon Jordan as a dependable and cooperative ally. Beginning in 1982 the Reagan administration successively requested F-16s, HAWK surface-to-air missiles, SIDEWINDERS, STINGERS, HARPOONS, and BLACKHAWKS for Jordan. In each instance the administration justified the sale on the longstanding relationship with the monarchy and on the need to bolster Jordan's legitimate defenses against the Syrians. In each instance Congress refused to honor the administration

requests and forbid any sale of modern equipment unless and until Jordan publicly committed to recognizing and negotiating directly with Israel. (18:545)

The height of humiliation in our security assistance relationship with Amman came in late 1985. King Hussein then told U.S. senators that he would not use U.S. weapons against Israel, and that Jordan was no longer at war with Israel. (20:2246) Later, President Reagan, honoring a promise made to the King Hussein, pushed a \$1.5 billion arms package for Jordan to the floor of the Senate. He argued that the sale was "essential to create the conditions for a lasting Middle East peace." (1:14)

Opponents of the sale argued strongly that sophisticated weapons in countries which border Israel were direct challenges to Israeli security. Since only Egypt had explicitly recognized Israel's right to exist and signed a peace treaty, no other Arab country, by this definition, could receive a weapon which posed an offensive threat to Tel Aviv. AIPAC attacked the sale, charging that Jordan had "never foresworn the use of force against Israel." They also said that Jordan purchased U.S. M-48 tanks in 1964 only to use them against Israel in the 1967 War, contrary to the U.S. Arms Export Control Act. AIPAC further stated that weapons' improvements in Jordan would force the Israelis to buy additional armaments from their already stretched and fragile economy thus leading to an escalation of the regional arms race. They cited the potential for

instability in Jordan because of its nearly 50 percent

- Palestinian population, and argued that even 40 F-16s and SAMs would not make a significant dent in Jordanian military equality with Syria. (20:2244) With the pro-Israeli lobby extensively campaigning against the sale, Congress overwhelmingly rejected the arms package by the vote of 97 to one. King Hussein's promises were meaningless.

Faced with the humiliation of the congressional defeat, Jordan still required a credible air defense system. King Hussein subsequently purchased lower quality SA-8, SA-13 and SA-14 SAMs from the Soviet Union, and turned to the French and British for Mirage 2000s and Tornados. (37:170-173, 19:2139)

In this case, the failure of Congress to meet the Jordanian defense needs as stated by DOD, Secretary of State and the Reagan administration forced Amman to turn to the Soviet Union and others. The U.S. failure to sell SAMs led to an increase in Soviet influence since Soviet advisors accompanied this equipment to Jordan. The arms aid rejections did not move the Jordanians any closer to Israel in terms of a comprehensive peace treaty. The congressional actions most certainly did not enhance overall Jordanian security against traditional enemies such as Syria. Congress, then, not the administration, undermined our regional security objectives. The U.S. neglected the needs of an ally whose relationship with America went back a half-century, neglected the initial Jordanian cooperation with

the Southwest Asia contingency plan and neglected the purposes of security assistance.

The Jordanian case clearly showed the disparity between the Camp David partners and others in the region. While the Israelis could build settlements in the West Bank, invade Lebanon with U.S.-supplied weapons and annex the Golan Heights, Jordan needed to negotiate with Israel as a precondition for security aid. While Egypt could bow out of the Ras Banas CENTCOM construction, and criticize the U.S. regional actions, Jordan had to suffer through public humiliation of the criticisms levied during the congressional hearings. The U.S. policy was not equitable. Perhaps King Hussein himself summed it up best when, following the overwhelming Senate disapproval of the Jordanian arms package in 1985, he stated: "This is no way to deal with problems with friends." (15:2691)

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia too felt the antagonistic treatment by Washington as it attempted to purchase arms during the Reagan years. Unlike the annual forgiven loans to Israel and Egypt, and unlike the credits sought by Jordan, Riyadh paid cash for its weapons. In most all cases, the Reagan administration supported the proposed sales to this country whose security and well-being was an declared matter of "vital strategic interest" to the U.S.

The first major arms sales victory in the Middle East for the Reagan White House occurred in late 1981. Congress

approved the \$8.5 billion Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft package in a close vote only after President Reagan and several top administration officials personally campaigned for passage. Because of this sale, Israel lobbied for and received an additional \$400 million in compensation. (20:224) Almost five years later with the delivery of these five AWACS and eight tanker planes impending, some congressmen and pro-Israeli lobbyists sought to delay or stop delivery of these already-paid-for aircraft. They charged that Riyadh had not pushed hard enough toward solving the region's problems. (34:34,8:25) The delay was unsuccessful, but dramatized the strength and ability of AIPAC to put pressure on Washington to renege even on a five-year old agreement.

The Reagan administration in 1984 sought to sell \$144 million worth of STINGERS to the Saudis to reinforce their air defenses as Iran and Iraq began attacking Saudi oil tankers in the Gulf. Congressional opponents insisted that this weaponry, if it fell into the hands of terrorists, would cause fear and instability throughout the world. Reagan dropped the request when it appeared certain that the sale would not pass in Congress. For all practical purposes, the U.S. told the Saudis that they could not be trusted with such dangerous, modern weapons. Two months later, the president invoked the emergency powers available under the Arms Export Control Act and delivered one-third of the original request by U.S. aircraft directly to the

Saudis. (16:960) Even in this instance, Washington insisted on the safeguard of keeping the missiles and launchers separate in an action that sharply contrasted with the laissez faire attitude for STINGERS covertly supplied to the Afghan guerrillas. The Saudis learned that humiliation came easily in seeking U.S. armaments.

The Saudis discovered another unique criteria for U.S. arms sales in early 1986. The administration planned to introduce a \$1.1 billion dollar arms sale package for Riyadh which included F-15s, M-1 tanks and missiles. Congress pressured the administration to delay the F-15 portion of the request because of charges that the Saudis had not provided assistance during the *USS Stark* incident in the Gulf. Subsequent reports revealed that U.S. restraints on the weaponry prevented Saudi pilots from reacting to protect the U.S. ship. (40:31,41:24) Critics of the sale also contended that these high performance aircraft could be used against Israel, even though they were F-15 C/D models which only have an air superiority role. In the end the President partially caved into congressional and AIPAC pressure and submitted only the missile part of the large arms package. The Saudis needed aircraft for future defense needs, so they ultimately purchased 72 TORNADO aircraft from the UK. Instead of being solely an air defense, air superiority fighter like the F-15C/D, the TORNADO provided the Saudis with a weapons platform which could easily be configured to the ground attack role. The TORNADO thus posed a

significantly greater threat to Israel than the F-15. Here the shortsightedness of Congress and AIPAC not only lost approximately 50,000 jobs for the American economy, but reduced the security of Israel in the process.

When the missile package, mentioned above, reached Congress, critics opposed this portion because it included another STINGER sale along with SIDEWINDER air-to-air missiles and HARPOON anti-ship or air-to-surface missiles. Congress disregarded the USAF calculation that the missile numbers were necessary to "meet the realistic threat projection. The administration, of course, stated that the sale would not threaten Israel's qualitative edge or change the balance of power in the Middle East. Even with no active opposition from the pro-Israeli lobby, Congress in May 1986 voted against the sale. This marked the first time that a president had been blocked from selling arms to a foreign country. (46:1164) The opponents this time again argued that STINGERS might fall into the hands of terrorists. They further disagreed with the Pentagon's assessment of the numbers needed, contending that the missiles were far in excess of Saudi requirements. (51:17) As a compromise, the administration agreed to remove the STINGERS from the package. This action paved the way for the eventual passage of the SIDEWINDER and HARPOON sale, but only after a presidential veto of the legislation was sustained by the Congress. (30:1) The administration offered, submitted and lobbied for arms sales to the Saudis,

but in the end the political leanings of Congress, swayed by the lobbying efforts on behalf of Israel, decided the nature of the sale.

The Saudi acquisition of the Chinese-made Silkworm intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) in 1988 added another dimension to the security assistance disparity in the region. In order for the Saudis to purchase replacement F-15s in 1987, the president, in an agreement with congressional leaders, sent a statement to Congress reaffirming that the Saudis possessed no nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. The text further stated that the Saudis had assured the administration that the missiles were not equipped with nuclear or chemical warheads. (5:41) The president would never have asked Israel to make similar statements about their Jericho II IRBM even after the flight test of the advanced version in 1987. The disparity was obvious.

The difference in treatment of Jordan and Saudi Arabia when compared with Israel and Egypt was apparent. The Reagan administration, tasked to formulate and execute a military strategy toward the area, constantly received "votes of no confidence" from Congress on almost every issue related to non-Camp David players. The President, backed by DOD, constantly tried to assure Congress that these arms sales were in the best interests of the country and of Israel. Even cash payments with the lure of American employment made no difference. In all cases, the

administration ensured that Congress understood that Israel could prevail in war despite the arms sales proposals.

Former Secretary of State Schultz perhaps expressed it best when he said: "We have to be prepared to help Israel retain its qualitative edge---period." (20:6) The qualitative edge of Israel was just the tip of the iceberg.

Gulf States

Unlike Saudi Arabia, the countries of Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were not relatively large purchasers of U.S. armaments. During the Reagan era, these Gulf states faced tremendous security pressures as a result of the Iran-Iraq war. Yet, when seeking to purchase arms during this time, each country faced a different interpretation of what it meant to "Buy American."

In 1987 Bahrain sought to purchase just 16 STINGER launchers and 70 missiles for a total cost of seven million dollars. When the Saudi missile agreement, mentioned above, finally passed, Congress added language to the bill which barred the sale of STINGERS to any country in the Gulf. Congress clearly directed this provision against the moderate Arab states. Eventually the administration resubmitted the package, extensively lobbied congressional committees and won approval. Congress, however, added a "buy-back" provision whereby the missile had to be returned to the United States in 18 months after purchase. At that time the U.S. would agree to supply Bahrain with an

alternative air defense system. (21:3122) Bahrain received the missiles but probably wondered why a long-term friend of the U.S., which had allowed the U.S. naval access since 1949 and which allowed an expansion of the U.S. presence during the Iran-Iraq war, received this kind of treatment.

A similar event occurred in the UAE. Following an Iranian air force attack on an offshore oil platform, the UAE asked the U.S. for STINGER missiles. The administration refused the request because of the congressional prohibition on sales of these weapons to any country in the Persian Gulf. The UAE promptly turned to the Soviet Union with cash and purchased the SA-14 missile. (55:21)

Kuwait faced a similar problem with a \$1.9 billion package of 40 F-18s and 400 MAVERICK air-to-surface missiles in 1988. The Reagan administration argued that the F-18s were the logical follow-on to the U.S.-built A-4s and that modern states such as Kuwait needed to become their own first line of defense. The package appeared to be in trouble when Congress, at the urging of the AIPAC, insisted that all missiles had to be the anti-ship variant versus the air-to-surface (ground) model originally proposed and originally requested by the Kuwaitis. Opponents argued that the air-to-ground model could be used against Israel. With extensive administration lobbying of Congress, the sale passed but only after all missiles were changed to the anti-ship variant. (14:2149)

In March, 1988, Qatar sought to purchase U.S. armaments as the Iran-Iraq war escalated. Congress learned that a dozen U.S.-made STINGERS had been obtained by the Qataris, probably from Iran, without U.S. permission. When the emirate refused to turn over the missiles to the U.S. for inspection, Congress banned the sale of all weapons to the country. The ban would be lifted only when the U.S. weapons were turned over to the U.S. (22:2732) Qatar considered this a sovereignty issue, and refused the U.S. request arguing that it was the only way they could obtain such arms for their own security.

In each of these four instances congressional action ensured that either the weapons were not delivered, were delivered with significant caveats or were not the same weapons as originally sought. These prohibitions on arms purchases would never have been part of an Israeli or even Egyptian arms package. Congressional restrictions applied indiscriminately limited the ability of the president to formulate a regional security policy through the use of security assistance. These Gulf states had all supported the U.S. CENTCOM objectives in the area during the Iran-Iraq war. They all now knew that the "Israeli first" policy even took precedence over the more urgent security needs of the United States.

Operation Staunch

Operation Staunch provided one of the most damaging and contradictory aspects of the Reagan administration arms

sales policies in the Middle East. This code named operation entailed vigorous diplomatic efforts through intelligence sharing and strong demarches to embargo or complicate arms shipments to Iran. Staunch intended to bring Iran to the negotiating table to end the Iran-Iraq war.

The Iran-Contra revelations showed that Operation Staunch was only the overt policy while administration officials covertly engineered an Israeli-brokered arms-for-hostages swap. Israel served as the conduit since it had an arms sales program with the Ayatollah's government. Israel also wanted to ensure that Iraqi energies were tied up in this conflict and unable to turn their attention to the Arab-Israeli dispute. The value of the arms shipments to Iran from the U.S. was marginal, and led to the release of only two hostages. But Operation Staunch demonstrated again that the U.S. would abandon the moderate Arab nations in the Gulf, in this case for the Realpolitik opportunity to gain influence in Iran. The Iran-Contra revelations stopped the U.S. arms transfers to Iran, but the damage was done. Operation Staunch raised serious concerns about the duplicity of the U.S. in supporting the security of the Arab regimes in the Middle East, in general, and in the Persian Gulf, in particular. (32:49-50)

CHAPTER IV

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE

Did U.S. security assistance and arms transfers during the Reagan years support U.S. national security objectives in the Middle East? We have looked at a number of examples where the sale of armaments made little sense in relationship to our regional objectives. At the same time we have seen where the congressional refusal to transfer arms through sales or loans conflicted with our espoused national interests in the area. Keeping these items in mind, let us now look at some of the most important national security objectives and determine whether they were supported or weakened by our security assistance and arms transfers during the Reagan era.

Objective: Fostering security and prosperity of Israel and the moderate Arab states

Security assistance and arms transfers benefits turned into a liability in pursuit of regional security because of the unbridled U.S. support for Israel, and to a lesser extent, Egypt. The U.S. Congress, influenced by AIPAC, consistently ensured the predominance of an "Israeli-first" security policy. Next in line, as if to lend credibility, the Congress secured security aid for Egypt as a Camp David

partner. After that, Congress approved major arms transfers to the moderate Arab states in the region but only after extensive lobbying from the administration. These actions damaged our overall security assistance posture in the region.

The U.S. failed to enforce the Arms Export Control Act and congressional prohibitions against Israeli use of U.S. weapons on a number of occasions. The most glaring instances came with the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The invasion, clearly an offensive act, resulted in no restrictions against military aid to Israel despite murmurings in Congress. This inaction begged direct comparison with the arms embargo slapped against a NATO ally and Muslim nation, Turkey, following its invasion of Cyprus in 1974. The U.S. argued that the invasion would help prevent terrorism by humiliating the Palestine Liberation Organization and would reduce Soviet influence by humiliating the military performance of a Soviet client, Syria. The invasion subsequently resulted in the insertion of U.S. Marines into Lebanon. Following the bombing at the Marine barracks, U.S. troops fired at Shiite Muslim forces, a fact not missed in the Arab world. In the end U.S. troops and Israeli troops left Lebanon having failed to achieve the security both sought. By failing to take strong action against the Israeli use of weapons, and by appearing to support Israeli policy in Lebanon, the U.S. undermined its own regional security interests.

Perhaps as a concession, the U.S. prohibited the transfer of CBUs to Israel following their illegal use during the Lebanese invasion. In this instance, Reagan merely stopped shipments of this weapon to Israel as the only penalty for violating the warning given in 1978. This second instance of the illegal use of CBUs should have warranted much stronger action against continued military aid to Israel.

Failure to punish Israel for the 1982 invasion led to the beginning of a new round in the regional arms race--a race which was not in the best interests of Israeli or overall regional security. The early overwhelming defeat of Damascus, especially in the air war, led to a massive arms resupply by the Soviets. Moscow immediately replaced equipment destroyed by the Israelis, as it sent advanced military hardware to compete on future battlefields. The new weaponry included SA-5 long-range SAMs to counter Israeli standoff platforms, SS-21 surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) capable of accurately attacking Israeli positions in Galilee and the MIG-29/FULCRUM advanced fighter. While the Soviets would have eventually exported these weapons to the area, Moscow countered criticism of the performance of Russian-made arms by standing firmly behind its client with the immediate arms resupply. Moscow then raised the ante for the Israelis by providing long-range SAMs and new tactical ballistic missiles. The inability of the U.S. to control Israel after the invasion ensured these

deliveries. The Syrians had to restore their national pride and the Soviets had to display the improved capabilities of their new weapons. The U.S. failure to take strong action decreased regional as well as overall Israeli security

What was the basis for Israeli security? The moral and historical commitment of the U.S. to the preservation of the state of Israel has never been seriously questioned. The need for Israeli military superiority over "any combination of the military forces of the most likely Arab confrontation states" has not been seriously debated in the U.S. since it was considered the only way that Israel could deter attack or prevent battlefield escalation. (7:972) During the Reagan administration, Israel received the largest single amount of FMSCR totalling almost \$15 billion. Tel Aviv got this amount because Congress and the administration accepted the Israeli specter of the Arab arms buildup, and as a reward for concessions at Camp David. Facing over 200 million Arabs, Israel cited arms transfers of \$147 billion to Arab nations from 1980 to 1987 as justification. (53:69-94) Israel, however, exaggerated the threat by treating the Arab states as if they were one hostile, monolithic force. In reality, the figures for Arab arms transfers include the Iraqi aid to fight the Iran-Iraq war, aid to Egypt, and, most importantly, numerous other political, cultural, religious and military factors that reduce the threat. Congress accepted this "worst case" threat. The implications of this were that the aggregate Arab power was

so large that any U.S. security assistance or arms transfer cooperation with any Arab state reduced Israeli security. (7:972) The continued acceptance of the Israeli-defined threat coupled with their inherent right of military superiority ensured that any Arab arms purchase was treated as a direct threat to Israeli security.

Washington demonstrated the inequality of its commitment to the security of moderate Arab countries on numerous occasions. As stated above, Congress denied numerous requests by moderate Arab states like Jordan and Saudi Arabia to purchase U.S. arms. The Congress treated each Arab nation as part of that monolithic bloc, rejecting the concept that each sovereign state had unique security requirements. In other words, Congress ignored years of friendship, and years of internal stability by these governments. Even as the security of the Persian Gulf region gained in primacy toward the end of the Reagan presidency, Congress rejected almost all but the security concerns of the Camp David partners. This one-sided approach in the region cancelled out many of the benefits of security assistance and arms transfer. Instead of enhancing moderation, ensuring interoperability and providing supplier nation advantages, our overemphasis on the security of Israel vis-a-vis the moderate Arab nations increasingly became a liability. As a result, moderate Arab nations with cash went elsewhere for military hardware at the expense of U.S. jobs, influence, and, in some cases, Israeli security.

Arms provided by others in great quantities and without restraints were a far greater risk to regional security than U.S. supplied armaments.

Objective: Limiting Soviet Influence

Security assistance and arms transfer decisions during the Reagan years provided new opportunities for the Soviets. Even though a key objective of U.S. policy in the region was to counter Soviet gains and reduce Moscow's influence, decisions made by Congress to ensure Israel's security allowed Soviet inroads in the region.

The military strength shown by Israel against Syria in the 1982 War required the Soviets to provide additional and more lethal support to their client. The resupply to Damascus verified the notion that Soviet military support followed the instability created by an aggressive, uncontrolled and expansionist Israel. (36:17) Large Soviet military sales occurred after the 1956, 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars. Soviet sales of the SS-21 SSMs with cluster munitions warheads showed that new and dangerous weapons would result if the U.S.-made weapons continued to outclass their Soviet counterparts.

The instability created by the Iran-Iraq war and by congressional arms sales disapprovals provided more opportunities for the expansion of Soviet influence. Oman, the UAE and Qatar established diplomatic relations with Moscow in the mid-1980s in a move which recognized the role of Moscow in the regional affairs. As the intensity of the

war increased in the late 1980s, the moderate Arab governments of the region turned to the U.S. for the purchase of military equipment to meet their urgent security needs. Bahrain and Saudi Arabia received SAMs only after extraordinary lobbying or actions by the administration. Congress turned down requests by Jordan, Kuwait and the UAE for air defense equipment because of fears of possible use or transfer for use against Israel. Each country, in turn, turned to the Soviets for their security needs even though the equipment purchased was inferior. Soviet advisors and training in the USSR came with each increment of military hardware. Through incidents such as this, and through the larger Soviet weapons' accounts with Libya, Syria and Iraq, the total number of Soviets advisors in the area outnumbered their American counterparts by over 15 to one. In an area where personal face-to-face communications are essential, the increased Soviet presence due to forfeited arms sales and the arms race against Israel translated into enhanced influence. (SS:39)

Influence in the region was not a zero-sum game between the USSR and the U.S. The French, British, Chinese or Brazilians eagerly took over markets abandoned by the U.S. The Soviets kept their major arms market accounts and made inroads, in part, from the haphazard nature of congressional decisions on security assistance. The Soviets lacked spectacular successes, but showed that they were reliable.

Objective: Just and Lasting Peace between Israel and the Arabs

The "Israeli first" security assistance mindset and the Soviet inroads in the region derived from the failure of the Reagan administration to move beyond Camp David. The U.S. failed to use its potential leverage with Israel and Egypt to help resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute--the root cause for many regional problems. From Camp David until the end of the Reagan era, the U.S. gave over \$17 billion in military aid to Israel and almost another \$12 billion to Egypt. The U.S. partially designed this multi-billion aid package to bring additional regional partners into the peace process. No additional states joined the peace process. Did the Reagan era security aid help to foster a just and lasting peace in the area?

Jordan, the most likely partner, not only refused to join, but was humiliated by conditions, discussed earlier, imposed by Congress for the receipt of arms. The constant attacks by Congress prompted an unidentified Arab to say,

You Americans should learn to treat your security partners more like private mistresses rather than like public whores. In either case you get your way, but in the former, at least the partner retains its dignity. (36:36)

Public humiliation of Jordan through the congressional security assistance process did little to encourage Jordan's participation in the peace process.

Several Israeli actions also served to cripple the peace process. The annexation of the Golan Heights, the

invasion of Lebanon and the abrupt refusal to consider the Reagan peace plan all acted to poison peace negotiations. The U.S. failure to discipline Israel for these actions reduced the American credibility to forge a true and just compromise. As long as generous aid was given to Tel Aviv without strings by Congress, the U.S. peace process was doomed to failure. Some commentators argued that the "delusion of imperial power" by Israel would stop if the U.S. turned off the "tap" (security aid). (3:2) This incorrectly assumed that aid translated directly to influence with Israel. Israel, due to the political strength of AIPAC especially in its ties with the Democratic Party, maintained a power base all its own. Israeli security aid was not based on U.S. national security objectives, but rather on political expediency. The U.S. security assistance faced a "Catch 22" situation--aid was the lever to exert influence on Israel yet the lever was controlled by Israel through AIPAC. The result was that massive aid continued as countries in the region and around the world shook their heads in disbelief at the weakness of America.

Objective: Assuring Access to Oil

Did our security assistance and arms transfer policies assist the U.S. in assuring access to oil? In the 1982 Defense Guidance, guaranteed access to Persian Gulf oil fell right behind defending North America and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries on the Reagan administration

list of military priorities. (64:7) Even though the U.S. imported less oil from the Persian Gulf in 1987 than in 1980, our allies in Europe and Japan received significant supplies from the Gulf. (57:10-20) More importantly, the Gulf contained an estimated 70 percent of the Free World's proven oil reserves, with many promising areas yet to be explored. (55:8-9) These vital interests mattered little when applied against the "Israeli first" criteria adopted by Congress.

During the 1980s the U.S. received oil from several Arab Gulf states. As we have seen, the Congress refused to provide weapons to these states--Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar--for their legitimate defense needs. Congress cared little that DOD, State, and the administration vouched that these weapons would pose no threat to Israel. Congress disregarded the view that security assistance and arms transfers were a critical part in the development of the CENTCOM "over the horizon" contingency plans for the oil states. Congress failed to understand that interoperability of weapons or access during a contingency directly related to security assistance. Ironically, as the Reagan administration focused on the Gulf for most of its eight years, Congress denied these moderate Arab, oil-supplier states the U.S. armaments to serve their own defenses needs and the needs of the U.S.,

While Congress deserved much of the blame for this inconsistency, the administration had its share. Operation

Staunch, engineered by administration personnel, showed the depths of duplicity and inconsistency. President Reagan seldom applied the full weight of his office to the congressional process. The 1981 Saudi Airborne Warning and Control System(AWACS) package, the 1986 Saudi missile sale and the 1987 Bahraini STINGER purchase represented the few instances where presidential intervention overcame the powerful coalition opposing major arms sales to almost any Arab state. Reagan should have been more forceful on behalf of these Arab states. States in the Gulf and King Hussein saw the president personally fight for and win \$100 million in security aid for the Contras, yet retreat on numerous occasions from Arab arms sales in the face of opposition by AIPAC. (38:176) The moderate Arab Gulf states represented the real "vital interests" of our national security objectives in the region. They deserved their arms requests, but often purchased elsewhere. Our "Israeli first" stipulation prevented the Reagan administration from optimizing the achievement of one of our primary national security objectives--assuring continued access to oil.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban's eloquent description of the Middle East dilemma appropriately described the problems faced by U.S. security assistance during the Reagan administration:

The United States is today the guarantor of Israel's security and economic viability, the protector of the Gulf oil states, the source of the region's development and programs, the friend and supporter of Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and the assiduous conciliator whenever regional tension threatens to burst into flames. (10:214-5)

The success of the United States in accommodating these bewildering and conflicting objectives rested on our ability to be firm yet evenhanded in dealing with the states in the region. In each of the four previously examined elements of the U.S. national security objectives for the Middle East, the implementation of the U.S. security assistance and arms transfer programs were found wanting.

The continuation of the security assistance legacy of Camp David paid dividends by bringing a degree of stability to the area. The 1980s saw no major Arab-Israeli conflict on the scale of previous wars for the first decade since Israeli independence. The massive security aid to Israel and Egypt certainly contributed to this achievement.

Yet at the same time the inconsistent treatment and, insensitivity to the security of moderate Arab nations, except Egypt, compromised the U.S. position as an honest broker in the region. By allowing the Israelis to conduct Machiavellian-style regional power politics with U.S. manufactured weapons and without negative U.S. retribution, the U.S. showed national weakness. By not applying sanctions to the Israelis as a result of their invasion of Lebanon, the U.S. opened the doors to a now and more dangerous round of the Middle East arms race. By refusing to push for the legitimate defense needs of moderate Arab states in the face of congressional opposition, President Reagan forfeited the U.S. potential to take a more active role in solving the myriad problems facing the region.

Moderate Arab leaders resigned themselves to a U.S. that was powerless to pursue a course of its own. The humiliations of each congressional hearing on arms sales coupled with the usual rejection, deeply offended them. Being perceived as too close to Israel's chief ally raised the fears of domestic instability from Palestinians to fundamentalist Muslims to other disaffected elements of their societies. (39:33) Yet Arab rulers often hurt their own cause through anti-U.S. statements which were eagerly grasped by AIPAC as signs of the lack of Arab commitment to the U.S. The result was a U.S. security assistance program that cared for the security of region, but only on Israeli terms.

The same inconsistencies that negatively affected regional security also resulted in Soviet inroads. The constant advocacy in Congress of an "Israeli first" posture lost numerous arms sales to the Soviets or other Western countries. The diversification of arms sources by moderate Arab states prevented an over-reliance on the U.S., but also reduced U.S. influence in the future alignment of these nations. Soviet sales to Jordan, Kuwait and the UAE brought hard currency to Moscow and took away the numerous positive advantages of U.S. arms assistance.

The inability of the U.S. to attract other Arab nations into the peace process showed the shallow basis for the massive armaments given to the Camp David partners. The \$3 billion annual military aid to Israel and Egypt could not convince the Jordanians that the U.S. was serious in the commitment to solving the Arab-Israeli dispute. The inability to nudge, push or force Israel into talks designed to deal with the host of underlying problems clearly displayed the overall lack of a policy for the Middle East. If arms sales--except to Israel and Egypt--seemed random and haphazard, then the foundation upon which our security assistance rested was flawed. No moderate Arab leader would take the risks necessary to bring about peace unless they were assured that America would work toward peace on a fair and equitable basis. U.S. arms transfers were not fair and just--why then would a U.S. brokered peace be anything different?

Finally, the strategic element of security assistance wrongfully focused on Israel as a "strategic asset," with the "Strategic" Cooperation Agreement and as a partner in the "Strategic" Defense Initiative. The real "strategic" concern should have been on assuring continued access to oil. Oil was and in the future will be the basis for U.S. and Western interests in the region. The buildup of the CENTCOM infrastructure during the Reagan years took place despite the inconsistencies and insensitivities toward the security needs of the Gulf nations. If Congress would not sell weapons to a friendly nation under attack, how then would it expect that nation to allow U.S. access or overflight rights in the event of a Gulf contingency? Arms prohibitions to moderate Arab Gulf states resulted in nothing more than a self-limitation on U.S. influence in the region. A security assistance approval process dominated by the disproportionate influence of a political minority allowed arms sales into a region of tension that were counterproductive to national or regional security objectives.

To eliminate the flaws in the security assistance program which allows aid to conflict with security objectives, several steps are necessary. The U.S. must make Israel understand that the resolution of the Palestinian problem, as the heart of the Arab-Israeli dispute, must take utmost priority. Further increases in economic and military assistance can be based upon the Israeli progress in peace

talks; this would be similar to past congressional restrictions placed on Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Long-term financial guarantees similar to those at Camp David could provide the necessary compensation.. The U.S. must act decisively if Israel again chooses to attack Arab targets outside of Israeli territory without considerable provocation. Israel must understand that future security aid will be leveraged by their degree of regional responsibility. The U.S must clearly communicate to Israel the rationale for arms sales to Arab nations.(7:973-82) The U.S. must slowly decrease the amount of security aid to Israel and Egypt. A gradual lessening of armaments may send the right signals to those who favor regional arms control, and may more equitably spread the scarce U.S. military assistance resources around the region and the world. Arms control talks with the USSR to limit certain categories of weapons such as long-range SSMs would be another good starting point.

Nowhere else in the world today is peace more essential than in the Middle East. As Senator Mathias once said, "The region will not become less relevant to U.S. national interests because it is less amenable to American influence." (38:173) Security assistance is necessary in the area. Disproportionate and inequitable security assistance is not. Security assistance and arms transfers, if used fairly and proportionately, can serve to generate positive U.S. influence in the region. Positive U.S.

influence can be used to further the cause for the peace in the area. The U.S. might follow the advice of the Senate Republican leader Dole who suggested that earmarked security assistance--Israel and Egypt included--must be cut to allow the president greater flexibility in this rapidly changing world. U.S. national security policy must adapt to this new world or risk isolation or at least a diminution of influence in this key region of the world.

APPENDIX A - U.S. FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CREDIT FINANCING

(\$millions)

FY	EGYPT	ISRAEL	JORDAN	MOROCCO	OMAN
1978	\$0	\$1,000	\$75	\$45	\$0
1979	\$1,500	\$3,200	\$85	\$45	\$0
1980	\$0	\$1,000	\$50	\$25	\$25
1981	\$550	\$1,400	\$42	\$33	\$25
1982	\$900	\$1,400	\$55	\$30	\$30
1983	\$1,325	\$1,700	\$52	\$75	\$30
1984	\$1,365	\$1,700	\$115	\$39	\$0
1985	\$1,175	\$1,400	\$90	\$3	\$0
1986	\$1,240	\$1,720	\$81	\$1	\$9
1987	\$1,300	\$1,800	\$0	\$12	\$0
1988	\$1,300	\$1,800	\$10	\$12	\$0
1989	\$1,300	\$1,800	\$10	\$52	\$0
TOTALS	\$11,955	\$19,920	\$665	\$372	\$119

**NOTE: All figures are from the Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, various editions each year.

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